

Community News

Donated bikes bring big smiles to GYAC students

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VERO BEACH -- Some bicycles are for exercise and others are for fun, but for the children at the Gifford Youth Achievement Center, a new bike helps broaden their horizons.

Malcolm Allen, owner of Orchid Island Bikes and Kayaks had previously been a part of a project with Bike Walk of Indian River County and other agencies to provide new Bike Pad Repair Stations, five stations in all around the county.

One station was installed at the GYAC which helped those who needed to repair their bicycles, but many parents in the area could not afford bikes for their children. When Allen and Bike Walk of Indian River County became aware of the real need for bikes which helped students get to and from school or allowed them the freedom to travel throughout the community, they stepped up.

Big time.

"We developed a form for the kids who did not have a bike to fill out and got about 25 back," said BWIRC president Laura Aaron. "Malcolm Allen, who is an absolute saint, arranged to donate bikes to fit all those kids, prepped, sized and



Big smiles on all the volunteers from Bike Walk of Indian River County, Gifford Youth Achievement staff, Sheriff's deputy Teddy Floyd and a some of the 25 children who received bikes from Orchid Island Bikes' Malcolm Allen. CHRISTINA TASCAN

delivered to GYAC."

BWIRC (via Laura's husband Hugh Aaron) rallied volunteers to fit helmets and adjust the bikes for the kids.

"We had a team of seven show up for

this -- Greg Speck, Dave Hunter, Jim Mann, Pete Nebenfuhr, Larry Ludke, Hugh and myself," said Aaron. "GYAC did a tremendous amount of work to pull this off, taking measurements so we

could get the correct size bikes and helmets to the kids. They made it really easy for us."

As each bus dropped off students to the after-school center, the children had to pass by a line of colorful, new bicycles gleaming in the late afternoon sun. The excitement was so high, it was all the staff could do to keep them from running over and running their hands over the shiny bikes and jumping on for a ride.

After small groups were brought out to be paired up with their new bike and fitted for their helmet, a few took tentative rides around the parking lot with the supervision of the volunteers. The joy of each of these children was written all over their faces but the volunteers had smiles just as big on their faces.

"It was a first for us, a truly rewarding experience," exclaimed Aaron. The Gifford Youth Achievement Center extends its gratitude to all the volunteers from Bike Walk of IRC who volunteered their time with the children and especially Malcolm Allen of Orchid Island Bikes and Kayaks for his incredible generosity.

The students have been given more than new bicycles, these gifts show them just how much the community cares, and that is priceless.